

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HONG K 09170 041012Z
ACTION EA-09

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
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INFO CINCPAC
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AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 9170

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PROP, PINT, CH, TW, US
SUBJ: PRC UNITED FRONT CAMPAIGN ON SINO-U.S. RELATIONS

REF: HONG KONG 9028

SUMMARY: PRO-PRC PRESS AND SPOKESMEN IN HONG KONG AND
MACAU HAVE BEEN PUSHING A UNITED FRONT LINE IN RECENT DAYS
WHICH EMPHASIZES A MODERATE PRC APPROACH TO TAIWAN AND
THE POSSIBILITIES OF A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IN SINO-U.S.
RELATIONS DURING SECRETARY VANCE'S PEKING TALKS. END
SUMMARY.

1. WE HAVE NOTED AN INCREASE IN OPTIMISTIC COMMENTARIES
AND ARTICLES IN THE LOCAL PRO-PRC PRESS DURING THE PAST
WEEK ON SINO-U.S. RELATIONS AND SECRETARY VANCE'S
FORTHCOMING TRIP TO PEKING. THE PRESIDENT'S "TIME"
INTERVIEW HAS BEEN REPRINTED AND ANALYZED FAVORABLY
AND REPEATEDLY IN THE THREE MAJOR PRO-PRC NEWSPAPERS.
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PRESIDENT CARTER'S REMARK THAT THERE IS "A CHANCE"
OF NORMALIZATION BY NEXT YEAR IS DESCRIBED AS THE
FIRST TIME A U.S. PRESIDENT HAS GIVEN A "TIMETABLE"
FOR RELATIONS. THE PRESIDENT'S USE OF THE TERM
"INTERESTED IN" WITH REFERENCE TO THE "PEACEFUL
LIVES OF THOSE WHO LIVE ON TAIWAN" HAS BEEN NOTED
AS EVIDENCE THAT THE U.S. IS LESS CONCERNED ABOUT

THE TAIWAN ISSUE. THE WORDS "INTERESTED IN" ARE CONTRASTED WITH PREVIOUS PHRASEOLOGY USED BY U.S. OFFICIALS, SUCH AS THE "DEMAND" THAT THE TAIWAN QUESTION BE SOLVED PEACEFULLY (THE CHINESE READING OF DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER'S JUNE 11 REMARK THAT THE QUESTION "SHOULD BE" SETTLED PEACEFULLY) AND THE PRESIDENT'S JUNE 30 PRESS CONFERENCE USE OF THE WORD "HOPE". "INTERESTED IN" IS SEEN AS A "DOWNGRADING" OF THE U.S. POSITION, LEAVING THE READER WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THE U.S. IS READY TO MOVE TOWARDS RESOLVING THE TAIWAN ISSUE ON THE PRC'S TERMS.

2. THE TAIWAN "OBSTACLE" HAS ALSO BEEN RAISED BY THE PRESS' REPUBLISHING A JULY 27 "NEW YORK TIMES" ARTICLE BY JOHN K. FAIRBANK. A SUBSEQUENT COMMENTARY POINTS OUT THAT FAIRBANK BELIEVES IT IS "IMPOSSIBLE" TO EXPECT A PROUD NATION LIKE CHINA TO TAKE ORDERS FROM FOREIGNERS OR LIMIT ITS FREEDOM OF ACTION OVER PART OF THE COUNTRY. RATHER, FAIRBANK IS QUOTED BY THE PAPER AS SUGGESTING THAT THE U.S. SHOULD CONFINE ITSELF TO A GENERAL UNILATERAL EXPRESSION OF CONCERN ABOUT THE MAINTENANCE OF STABILITY IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC.

3. ACCOMPANYING SUCH ARTICLES IMPLYING U.S. POLICY SHIFTS, THE PRO-PRC PRESS HAS BEEN HAVING A FIELD DAY REPORTING, IN NUMEROUS ARTICLES, ON THE LOW MORALE, CONFIDENTIAL

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DISMAY AND CONFUSION IN TAIWAN, OFTEN QUOTING EXTENSIVELY FROM TAIWAN PAPERS. AS ALWAYS, DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN THE ROC GOVERNMENT AND THE "PEOPLE" ARE HIGHLIGHTED AND PERHAPS EVEN EXAGGERATED TO SHOW THAT IT IS ONLY THE SMALL "CHIANG CLIQUE" WHICH FEARS U.S. MOVES TOWARDS NORMALIZATION. QUOTES FROM TAIWAN PAPERS ARE GIVEN INDICATING THAT THE QUESTION OF PRC-ROC NEGOTIATIONS IS VERY MUCH ALIVE IN TAIWAN. THE SELECTIVE QUOTES AND INTERPRETIVE MATERIAL FROM THE LOCAL PAPER'S OWN COMMENTATOR SUGGEST THAT IT IS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION THAT SECRETARY VANCE WILL ACCEPT AT LEAST SOME OF THE PRC'S DEMANDSS.

4. THIS LINE WAS ECHOED BY MACAU'S LEADING PRC SPOKESMAN HO YIN WHO TOLD A VISITING U.S. BUSINESSMAN THIS WEEK THAT HE PERSONALLY FELT THE PRC HOPED FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE TAIWAN PROBLEM AND THAT SECRETARY VANCE WOULD BE TOLD THIS DURING HIS VISIT. IN ANOTHER CONVERSATION, BANK OF CHINA SUB-MANAGER FONG SHAN-KUEI QUERIED VISITING U.S. ECONOMIST RICHARD WALKER REPEATEDLY ON DEVELOPMENTS (INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS) AFTER SINO-U.S. NORMALIZATION.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THERE ARE FEW "NON-BELIEVERS"
AMONG THE CHINESE READERS OF THE PRO-PRC PRESS IN
HONG KONG, THE CONTINUING DRUMBEAT OF ARTICLES
IMPLYING MOVEMENT IN SINO-U.S. RELATIONS IS OBVIOUSLY
WELL ORCHESTRATED AND AIMED AT FOREIGN AUDIENCES.
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